

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION KNOX COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE

Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting

Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – October 24, 2019 – 5:00 P.M.

A Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting was held on Thursday, October 24, 2019, at 5:00 P.M., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The Administrative Assistant was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present: Commissioner Dorothy G. Meriwether, District #1, Commissioner Richard L. Parent, District #2 and Commissioner Sharyn L. Pohlman, District #3.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Deputy Communications Director Wally Tower, Interim Communications Director Robert Coombs, Building Maintenance Supervisor Jim Hagan, Maine Real Estate Management Jesse McCue and Paul Cook, EMA Director Ray Sisk, EMA Administrative Assistant Candice Richards.

Budget Committee members present: Chair Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns and Thomas Marshall, Jr. (*Absent: Nick Lapham*)

Others in Attendance: None

Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting Commission Hearing Room Thursday – October 24, 2019 – 5:00 P.M.

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| I. | 5:00 | Meeting called to order (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Richard Parent, Jr. for the Knox County Commission) |
| II. | 5:01 | Public Comment |
| III. | 5:05 | Approve Minutes (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Richard Parent, Jr. for the Knox County Commission)
1. Minutes of the Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 17, 2019 |
| IV. | 5:10 | Budget Review
1. Building Maintenance - Courthouse (Pg.10)
2. Building Maintenance - KCPSB (Pg. 11)
3. Communications (Pgs. 26-29)
4. Emergency Management Agency (Pg. 15)
5. Finance (Pg. 16) |
| V. | | Adjourn |

I. Meeting Called to Order

The October 24, 2019 Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting was called to order by Budget Committee Chair Bob Duke and Commissioner Chair Richard Parent, Jr. at 5:00 P.M.

II. Public Comment:

None

Comments from County Administrator Hart:

- Administrator Hart handed out a letter from Rockport Town Manager Bill Post to Commission & Budget Committee members. The letter references the support of MCEDD. Now with the disillusion of the Midcoast Regional Planning Commission, there is a gap in planning services for Knox County.

- Administrator Hart provided a letter from the Interim Town Manager of Thomaston, Kara George, also in support of MCEDD.
- Budget Committee Chair Duke stated he will get information out to the Board on MCEDD, but will not spend a large amount of time on it.
- ***Please note: All votes taken at each Joint Commission & Budget Committee Budget Review Meetings on Departmental Budgets are “straw votes”, with the exception of the December 5, 2019 final vote on the 2020 Knox County Budget.***

III. Approve Minutes

1. Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 17, 2019
 - *Barry Norris made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 17, 2019. Randy Stearns seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
 - *Commission did not vote: At the next Joint Commission & Budget Committee Meeting on October 31st, the Commission will vote on the approval of the October 17th Meeting Minutes.*

IV. Budget Review:

1. Building Maintenance - Courthouse

Jesse McCue and Paul Cook from Maine Real Estate Management & Maintenance Supervisor Jim Hagan spoke:

- Building Repairs & Maintenance line has decreased by **-46%**. This is due to last year the major renovations (HVAC project) with Siemens were completed, thus the decline in this year's Budget.
- There is a 2% decrease in the Cleaning line. The cleaning contract is the same; however, the cost for window cleaning can be variable, and is lower than what was anticipated for the 2020 Budget.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$392,091:

In favor: 7 (Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Thomas Marshall, Jr. and Randy Stearns)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$392,091:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Jr., Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

2. Building Maintenance - KCPSB

Jesse McCue and Paul Cook from Maine Real Estate Management & Maintenance Supervisor Jim Hagan spoke:

- A large increase in the Building Upgrade line due to the ongoing floor issue.
- Chair Duke spoke regarding the floor: Currently, the existing slab is emanating moisture and some calcium through the slab. There is no easy way to solve the problem. He proposes to remove all the flooring that is currently in the building, and put a membrane down that isolates any moisture or calcium from moving through into a new floor. It is an expensive and labor intensive process no matter who does it. It will be a bit disruptive to do the work, but until something is done the problem will continue.
- A Budget Committee Member asked what kind of flooring was being proposed. Chair Duke stated a vinyl product that does not require wax, but is a very high wear product. This product allows

creating a waterproof barrier. In a way it is sort of like ice & water shield only it is light, and it would contain moisture as well as any other contaminants from getting through the floor.

- Budget Committee Member asked, once the floor is fixed what is the expected life of the new product/structure? Chair Duke stated the product that was specified in commercial terms the “ware layer” of 20 mm on top of a core. The product recommended in this situation is a “ware layer” of 40 mm, and this is the highest “ware layer”. The expectancy is about 25-30 years
The biggest benefit is that there is no refinishing of the floor which is always expensive. Overall, this type of floor will be a lower cost in maintenance.
- Another question asked, “Where the life expectancy is a long time, do we have a policy of when we finance this over a number of years or do we take it out of this year’s Budget?” Administrator Hart stated we would fund this through the budget due to the amount of the flooring issue.
- A Budget Committee Member asked, “What will you do to relieve the pressure that you’re not allowing to come out. Is any research being done to find out how it’s going to go outside the base of the building? Administrator Hart stated, “The figure Chair Duke gave us is a Budget number and that’s what we’ve put in the Budget, plus an additional amount to still try to figure out what we have to do outside to get rid of the water that is there. We have had the City of Rockland come (*this has been discussed with the Commissioners*) to scope all the lines. For this project we are not using Gartley & Dorskey, they have recommended we use S.W. Cole. They came in and did some core samples of the slab and the tile area. We are also trying to figure out why the perimeter drains are totally dry. Chair Duke stated there are hot spot in the slab. EMA and some areas in the Sheriff’s Department are bad, but some offices show no effects at all. One option, if the Budget Committee chose to break it up, a recommendation would be that EMA would be done in one year then Sheriff’s Department done the next year. Chair Duke recommends doing it all at once but he was just giving another option.
- Building Envelope was involved in the study of this space and they came out with the same conclusion as Chair Duke did. The moisture goes to the perimeter.
- The quality of air in this space is not good. It has a strong odor when it is hot and humid.
- A Budget Committee Member asked, “How old is the building? And how long has this been a problem?” Administrator Hart stated the building was renovated in 2012 and we moved in, in 2013. There were no issues the first 3-4 years it’s been in just the last couple of years that we’ve had a problem. He has filed a claim with the insurance company and he has also talked to an attorney about potentially going after the general contractor. We have to look at all avenues in this situation. It makes sense to file a claim with the insurance company.
- A Commissioner asked, “Is the investigative figures in or are there any more investigation necessary? And if so, if we are still trying to determine the problem where the number in the Budget for that?” Administrator Hart stated he would say with what we need to do outside we feel pretty comfortable with the figure chosen.
- Building Maintenance Supervisor Hagan stated that at this point a barrier is the way to go.
- There will be a reduction in Heating Fuel and Propane in the final budget. Locked in Propane at \$0.99 we were at \$1.249 in current Budget, Heating Fuel we were at \$2.375, and we locked in at \$2.05 for a tanker load, which the Jail takes, and Home Delivery at the Airport is \$2.15. So, there will be a reduction due to the prices on Heating Fuel & Propane we received for this year.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$188,011:

In favor: 7 (Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Thomas Marshall, Jr. and Randy Stearns)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$188,011:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

3. Communications

Interim Director Robert Coombs spoke:

Personnel - there is a 4% increase in the Budget – there will be a new Communications Director next year (2020). The money budgeted for the new Communications Director is that equal to Step 9. Interim Director Coombs will be in that position for 6 months and this position will be advertised. Anyone internally or externally can apply for that position. An Oral Board will be held, and if someone internally is recommended that would be considered a promotion. The internal candidate would have to follow the promotion process. If someone is hired from outside the highest they could come in as a Step 9.

- MRI completed a study on the Communications Department and the Commissioners viewed the draft of the report. Nothing has been finalized as of yet. The final report should be ready, at the earliest, on November 12th, if not in November then at the December meeting. Administrator Hart's recommendation is that this report does not affect this Budget. If there is any affect at all it would affect the future Budget.
- A Budget Committee Member stated in 2018 for overtime we budgeted \$69,000 and came in at \$134,540. In 2019 we budgeted \$69,000, as of August of this year we are already at \$138,000, and in 2020 were still prosing \$69,000 overtime. Historically speaking \$69,000 is not working, why are we still staying with that number? Administrator Hart replied by saying, we cannot anticipate turnover and whether or not we can obtain & keep new employees. Turnover increases overtime which cannot be anticipated. Right now Communications is in the process of hiring. We are almost there for full staff. State wide there is a problem with finding and keeping Dispatcher employees. We anticipate, and want to be full staff and that's how we budget every department.
- Finance Director Robinson stated that when she looked at a projection through the year end what Communications is spending in overtime which is very large, is being offset in savings from benefits and the savings from the positions that are open. Does that always happen, we hope that it will, but there will be times that it won't.
- A Budget Committee Member asked if there was a turnover percentage. Administrator Hart stated he did not have that specific information. There have been 2-3 vacancies consistently throughout the year.
- Another Budget Committee Member asked how many people have actually walked out and had to be replaced? Interim Director Coombs replied by saying there has been 6-7 that have been brought in and started training and realized this is not what they want. Three have been hired this year that are still here. Ten line Dispatchers are the standard staffing and turning over 6 a year, which is a 60% turnover rate.
- EMA Administrative Programs Coordinator Richards commented that a lot of turnover may be due to this job has been used as a "stepping stone". A person starts out as being a Dispatcher, and then decides to be a firefighter or police officer when an opening becomes available.

Contractual:

- One Commissioner had a question regarding mention of a Project Consultant. Do we have a Project Consultant now, correct? Administrator Hart stated they only had one when we did the radio upgrade. We worked with Bruce Marcus who is a Radio Vendor and Consultant from Connecticut. We utilized Bruce to figure out our radio infrastructure and towers.

Capital:

- Chair Duke's understanding is that in past our Capital items were being funded from the departments Surplus and now funding is looking to come from the Budget. For whatever reason, we do not have the Surplus to fund that as we have in the past years.
- A Budget Committee Member had a question about the \$77,000 for radio upgrade. In reading Linwood's report it sounds like there is going to be a major change to a broadband base system. Is

this going to eliminate the need for this radio stuff, or are they two completely separate areas? Interim Director Coombs answered by saying they are two completely separate systems.

- Looking at an infrastructure upgrade – Interim Director Coombs stated we have 5 tower sites throughout Knox County and each one is just like a computer. These were installed roughly 8 years, they are on 24-7, 365 days a year, they take lightening strikes, and they are on top of a mountain, needless to say they are getting tired. With this system it will allow us to do a lot more things, as well take advantage of the digital side of things. By putting this in place we are building for the future.
- A Commissioner asked about the FCC mandate and if this new system will satisfy that.
- Interim Director Coombs stated that the FCC has rolled out the mandate and with this new system, a flip of a switch this will make sure the County is ready to go digital. We do have to make sure the Municipalities are ready to go.
- A Commissioner asked if this would put a huge burden on Municipalities.
- Interim Director Coombs said the Town of Thomaston, Camden and Rockport are ready to go. Rockland is working their way to digital and the Sheriff's Department is doing the same. The biggest hurdle to overcome right now is the EMS & Fire agencies.
- Another Commissioner asked if everyone have to be digital in order to use the system? Interim Director Coombs stated yes, everyone has to be heading that way.
- EMA Director Sisk stated that the Dispatch leadership makes it a point to ask towns if they replace any radios or apparatuses to replace with digital capable equipment.
- A Commissioner asked if we are still doing "County Buys".
- EMA Director Sisk stated yes we are still doing County Buys, and we have talked about doing another big County Buy so this will be the way that we will economically make the transition.
- Budget Committee Member asked about the Buying program. Has there been any progress on this?
- EMA Director stated that we have asked town thru the Users Group. The last big buy was in 2013. We gave the towns at least 2 years heads up so they could go through the municipal budgeting cycles and set money aside to make the buys. We put the contracts out and ended up tripling the size of the buys which brought the overall price way down. We are hoping to do the same thing again.
- EMA Director Sisk stated that the day the FCC goes mandatory with digital equipment, the price will either lock in to where it is now or they will escalate again because now it will be a mandate.
- A Commissioner wants to note that in the Capital plan for Communications it was for each item it's written as being funded by Undesignated Fund Balance or Surplus. Administrator Hart was asked about this at the beginning of the meeting and it seemed like traditionally these expenditures were in fact paid for Undesignated Fund Balance. Would like to have a discussion with the Commission and encourage future Capital expenditures to actually budget tightly in the Budget. All 3 Commissioners agree that more discussion is needed.
- Finance Director Robinson stated that 2 years ago we had discussed that anytime monies are moving from the Budget to the Reserve account the Budget Committee will be and has been part of that process. We have put that in place. (Need to think about Dispatch differently from other departments.)
- Budget Committee Member asked how many calls does center handle? Interim Director Coombs will get the report for the 2019 amount of calls to the Budget Committee by next week. He stated in 2018, there were 13,000 (911) calls -78% of those were wireless phone calls. Non-Emergency calls were 95,000 and 69,000 of those calls were from a wireless phone = 72% were wireless calls. Fire, Police & EMS calls were at 50,337 - Fire was just over 1,800, Police was at 41,580 & EMS was at 5,938 calls. Knox County's numbers are significantly higher than most other Dispatch centers. If you were to combine Lincoln and Waldo's calls, it would equal the amount that Knox County takes. Every call starts at the Knox County Regional Communications Center.
- A Commissioner wanted to thank the Knox County Regional Communications Center for all of their hard work & time they put in on a daily basis. They are very much appreciated!

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$1,346,522:

In favor: 4 (Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Roger Peabody and Thomas Marshall, Jr.)

Against: 2 Bob Duke & Shawn Levasseur

Abstained: 1 Randy Stearns

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$1,346,522:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

4. Emergency Management Agency

EMA Director Sisk spoke: ("White paper", created by EMA Director Sisk, given to all Budget Committee Members and Commissioners)

- The EMA Administrative Assistant position was reclassified, and will have a change in job title to EMA Administrative Program Coordinator, to align with duties and responsibilities. The Grade will also change from Grade 9 to Grade 11. With these changes it will make the wage jump more than 4%.
- \$10,000 has been included in Capital expenses, to be used towards a vehicle replacement sometime in 2021. There has been an increase with the maintenance costs with this current vehicle, but EMA Director believes it will last where it's been taken care of.
- A Budget Committee Member asked a question about the \$10,000 for a vehicle. This was placed in a reserve account & you do not expect to spend any of this \$10,000 this Budget year? How does this work accounting wise. At the end of the year does that roll into a Reserve or a Surplus? Finance Director Robinson stated that if something is budgeted specific for a project that doesn't get completed or a piece of equipment that doesn't get purchased, it then gets moved into a Reserve Account at the end of the year.
- A Budget Committee Member had a question about GIS. Are we billing the towns for the GIS services that EMA performs - Not just the software, but the people who run it as well? EMA Director Sisk stated the licensing we pay for it's covered through a Homeland Security Grant. We do bill back periodically to the towns for work that is done by us. This is typically where a town asks for an enormous amount of work. Generally 24 hours a week are dedicated to EMA work and 6 hours are dedicated to Municipal projects.
- A Budget Committee Member asked if any work on "Sea Level Rise" had been done. EMA Director Sisk stated yes, a lot of work has been done on that. Right now there are some active projects with the Town of Vinalhaven, Community Rating work with St. George, we've done work with Rockport and we've done a lot with the Island Institute for their National Academy of Science Grant that they are using.
- An award of \$137,578 had been received to cover the allowable portion of the primary EMA Budget.
- Our Logistics Planner is a 25 hour operation, and is 100% funded through our State Homeland Security Grant (SHSP) award.
- Office Supplies & Equipment increased due to a merge with an existing Equipment line.
- Tower Rental (Contractual Services) is still at no cost due to this is in its 7th year of funding through EMA and the EMPG.
- Radio Repairs & Maintenance increased \$50 from last year. This reflects antenna maintenance and expected M & R expenses.
- Gas consumption has increased by \$59 due to now towing a trailer a lot of places.
- Automobile Repairs has increased by \$186 as this includes unplanned maintenance where the current EMA vehicle is aging.
- The Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) is a yearly Federal Grant award which provides funding on a 50% reimbursement basis for expenses supporting EMA programs. The

County has had multiple years of successful reimbursements for EMA program real property related expenses for the Public Safety Building

- This certified EMA program assigns 30.22% of associated Building Maintenance and Debt Service expenses. Public Safety Building Maintenance reimbursements are shown as revenue to the “Courthouse Generator” reserve account. Public Safety Debt Service reimbursements are shown as revenue on the “Miscellaneous” sheet.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$109,684:

In favor: 7 (Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Thomas Marshall, Jr. and Randy Stearns)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$109,684:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

5. Finance:

Finance Director Robinson spoke:

- The biggest increase is in Personnel.
- Contractual/Expenditures/Commodities have reduced.
- The Revenue has increased a bit which is then offsetting the Personnel costs that have increased.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$305,120:

In favor: 7 (Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Thomas Marshall, Jr. and Randy Stearns)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$305,120:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

6. Other

- Next Budget Review Session on October 31st will host:
 - MCEDD
 - Restorative Justice Project
 - Sheriff’s Office – Jail Division
 - Sheriff’s Office – Patrol Division
- A Budget Committee member received a letter addressed to the Commission that talked about coverage on Vinalhaven & North Haven. Will there be discussion with the Commission on this issue? Administrator Hart stated the issue was briefly discussed at one of the past Commission Meetings. However, there is a Special Commission Work Session scheduled for November 8th at 10:00 A.M. to discuss the Vinalhaven & North Haven Deputy coverage issue. There is money in the 2019 Budget if that position becomes filled.

V. Adjourn

- *Barry Norris made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Randy Stearns seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *Commissioner Pohlman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Meriwether seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

The next Joint Quarterly Budget Committee & Commission Meeting will be held on **October 31st**
@ 5:00 P.M.

The meeting adjourned at 6:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Budget Committee and Knox County Commission approved these minutes
at the Joint Meeting held on October 31, 2019.**